Leah Eichler

Leah Eichler's Profile

Will women buy the iPad?

By **Leah Eichler** | APRIL 1, 2010

APPLE | IPAD

ABOUT LEAH

Leah Eichler

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With hours to go until the iPad hits stores, the big question on my mind is: Will women buy it?

The iPad initially elicited giggles and mockery from women (see the NYT's story and Fast Company's story). The catchy but brand damaging term "iTampon" trended on twitter soon after the Apple announcement.

This is no trivial issue for Apple. According to She-conomy, 85 percent of all brand purchases are made by women. In a survey conducted by Retrevo.com, only 7 percent of female respondents said they would buy an iPad. Unfortunately for Apple, that data sounds consistent with the many female technophiles I've heard from. For several reasons, when asked about the much-hyped gadget, many women are keeping a tight grip on their purse strings and just saying "no." Here's why:

Functionality

Most female technophiles agree that when it comes to gadgets, women look for tools that will improve their lives by increasing their productivity or saving them time. "I don't think the iPad does that," writes Nelly Yusupova, of DigitalWoman via Twitter. "iPad is a beautiful piece of engineering but really it is just a bright, shiny, new gadget to look at and say ohhhh!"

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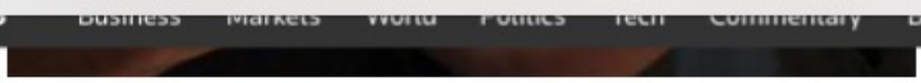

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Other women lament the gadgets lack of functionality for their working lives as well.

"No Photoshop? No Adobe programs at all? And why, for the love of Christ, can you not use it as a drawing tablet? Aren't most Mac users in the 18-35 year old range and in creative fields of work?" argues Lane Bensen, a social media manager and writer. "I don't see why any woman (or man for that matter) would purchase the "iPad" unless they were having a digital menstrual cycle."

Size

I admit, I haven't succumbed to the Apple lifestyle yet but as a lover of gadgets and all things convenient, my interest was piqued. Yet, any gadget needs to pass this quintessential test: Will it fit in my purse? At 9.56″ tall and 7.47″ wide, I fret it won't.

"My life and businesses changed for the better in a big way when I got the iPhone and was able to stop carrying a camera, a palm, a phone, and an iPod, and a laptop when I traveled," said Maggie Soloday, a New York based photography editor.

Soloday was so excited by the iPad announcement that she watched it in live streams at gdgt and had four different feeds and Twitter open to see what everyone was saying the day of the announcement. But when it comes to purchasing the iPad this weekend, her answer is still no. "I would have to start carrying more devices again; the iPad and iPhone."

Still, other women, who don't share my penchant for smaller and lighter purses, may not view size as the ultimate deterrent.

"Since we are the gender usually characterized as lugging around bags obnoxiously proportioned to our size, I'd get one just for the fact that I could fit it in my purse!" exclaims Bensen. "That is of course, if it contained all the software platforms I needed and worked completely like a laptop/netbook. Having these interface problems and the lack of compatibility with various forms of software just don't really cut it. And for that, it seems a waste of money."

That brings me to the last obstacle facing women mulling the iPad: **the cost.**

"I already pay for a data plan. Not having the data plan on the iPad would be annoying," explains Soloday. "Though I am OK with the idea of downloading my New Yorker and the New York Times onto the iPad when I have access to free Wi-fi, I still think it sounds like more money and more effort for right

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Then again, not all women I encountered were pessimistic about the future of iPad in women's hands. Colleen Quill, a digital entertainment veteran, sees some hope:

"While females might be slower to jump in to a new device, they will actually utilize it more over the long haul than men. I have a lot of male friends who have to have the latest and greatest technology, which once they figure it out, then hand over to their wives."

Beth Blecherman, tech blogger and founder of Techmamas.com, argues that "beyond all the jokes, the iPad is a great product for people who have a ton of content on iTunes."

"But it's not a perfect fit for everyone," she warns.

(Pictured above: A host shows off the back of Apple's "iPad" , a new tablet computing device, after its launch event in San Francisco, California, January 27, 2010. REUTERS/Kimberly White)

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